

Meeting Minutes  
Of the Economic Development Committee

May 20, 2008

Milton Library

Committee members in attendance: Carla Preston, Sally Harkins, Mike Clark, Tom Huff, Ellen Passman, Joanie Martin-Brown

Town public in attendance: Bob Blayney, Melinda Huff, Denny Hughes, Hal Godwin, Barbara Lillien, Alex Donnan.

At 6:50 p.m. Martin-Brown called the meeting to order.

The April 15, 2008 Meeting minutes were motioned to approve by Carla Preston and Seconded by Harkins. Discussion followed, Mike Clark corrected Chamber's Executive Director name to read Dalzell. Motion approved.

At 7:00 p.m. Martin-Brown introduced speakers.

Jeff Stone –Director of Infrastructure & Intergovernmental Relations

Heather Keegan- Commercial & Industrial Real Estate liaison for Kent and Sussex Counties.

Martin-Brown had all committee members and town people introduce themselves.

**Jeff Stone** gave a brief synopsis of how the different departments in the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) work together and what their purpose is. He stated that Milton needed to be on DEDO radar screen.

**Heather Keegan's** department is available to help new companies start up. They are able to assist in **finding properties** and help them get up and running. She stated that they needed to be more involved in finding out the needs of the communities. In the past they had focus on New Castle, and now needed to put more of a focus on Sussex Co.

**Diane Laird**, from Main Street project & DEDO work closely together they are partners. They have specialists within the different departments familiar with helping a business grow, or start up, improve marketing, provide training grants, and technical assistance.

Martin-Brown called upon Hal Godwin, Deputy County Administrator for Sussex County Council, and the lead on Sussex County economic development for David Baker, the County Administrator, to brief the group on what he has been doing at the county level.

Mr. Godwin stated that he has spent considerable time learning about the county and training. He wants to redefine the direction of Sussex Co. What direction should Sussex Co be going in? He believes the county doesn't need any more reports; that there is a sufficient number of reports being generated already. He noted that because brick and

mortar/construction has slowed down the profile of economic development must change, and small businesses seem to be the future. There is a lot of talent in Sussex Co. that needs to be harnessed.

Jeff Stone- noted that Del Tech is a great resource for the committee they could help in finding out what direction the town should be going in economically. [NOTE: The recently released vision paper of the University of Delaware calls for an additional campus to be located in Sussex County, with *one* focus being agriculture.]

Martin-Brown proposed that 4 citizen volunteer working groups be created, #1 & #4 focused on topics highly recommended by the Main Street Program, The working groups are:

1. Entrepreneurship – How to promote this is Town.
2. Alternative transportation modes for Milton – Making Milton as Golf Cart friendly town as has been done in Long Neck, and in other American cities to reduce pollution, save gas, double parking spaces, reduce traffic, create maintenance and associated employment, create a new town income stream and support community mobility.
3. Review of Town business ordinances and those that affect Town business.
4. Landlord liaison group. Engaging Town landlords to explore what kinds of incentives could lead to increased occupancy in Town Center, and to engage early on with a view of later engagement in the Main Street program.

Martin-Brown invited Mr. Hughes to serve as liaison for the landlord group. Mr. Hughes' working group would be membered by those he selected and they would work with landlords on incentive proposals.

Mr. Hughes felt that before he could commit he wanted to know what was the plan for the Economic Dev. Comm., what was our vision? Martin-Brown responded that the vision was moving forward under the Main Street umbrella, as inclusion of business leaders and landlords is part of the Main Street program expectations. (NOTE: in his follow up conversation Mr. Hughes agreed to attend the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting to pursue this matter, and Mr. Tom Jones a business partner of Irish Eyes Restaurant has agreed to work with Mr. Hughes on this landlord "outreach" effort, as has Tom Huff. Mr. Jones will attend the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Jeff Stone suggested the committee needed to address the questions where did we want to go, what was our vision? Did Milton want to be a historical or business town? {Martin-Brown believes they can be both.} There were questions as to what is our mission statement? Carla Preston volunteered to work on a vision statement, (which has since been done in draft and sent by email to committee members.)

Martin-Brown reminded the group that approximately three years ago the then Town administration and the Economic Development Committee worked with Joe Farrell of the University of Delaware to prepare a Town wide survey which was completed, and sent out to done to all taxpayers. The returns were compiled, and each of the present

Economic Development Committee members has received a copy of that survey at the April meeting. **(Please note: Joe Farrell has kindly agreed to address that survey at the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, BEGINNING AT 6:45 p.m. in the Town Library.)**

Alex Donnan volunteered to work on the business ordinances. P.D. Cameninisch and Ed Harris have since agreed to work with Alex on this effort.

Dr. Clendaniel was unable to attend the meeting to assume leadership of the alternative transportation-working group (golf carts), but Gwen Foehner (who was absent) has since volunteered to lead that effort.

Mike Clark has the entrepreneurship folder at this juncture, as Mark Quigley was absent.

There was some sentiment expressed that forming the small groups be put on hold, but the Chair elected not to do this, as a mission vision statement will be about Main Street, but will not effect, one way or the other, the activities of the four small working groups, as the long standing mission of the Economic Development Committee is to promote business in the Town Center, as defined by Town Council, its boundaries established 4 years ago. Three of the four working groups do respond specifically to this Committee's generic mission.

Melinda Huff agreed to form an additional working group to put together a proposal to submit in time (June 30 deadline) for a Preservation Grant that would underwrite Heritage Tours, which would also help promote the business climate of downtown as the Chamber's Horseshoe Crab/Shorebird Festival, Holly Festival, and Bargains on the Broadkill do, as well as other Town wide annual events. [NOTE: Since Melinda Huff's overture on this, demands on her have increased, and she put a hold on her efforts until this fall, when another deadline is available.] Bob Blayney and Ellen Passman volunteered to help this effort.

The motion for the meeting to adjourn was made by Passman, and seconded by Clark, and unanimously approved.

At 8:00 p. m. the meeting was adjourned.

Draft Submitted by S J Harkins  
2<sup>nd</sup> draft Jmartinbrown